

A
S E R M O N,

Preached on St. John's Day,

BEFORE THE LODGES

No. 4, 8, and 12,

ANCIENT YORK MASONS:

IN CHRIST'S CHURCH,

M O N T R E A L.

BY THE REV. JAMES TUNSTALL.

M O N T R E A L:

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*Saint Paul's Lodge No. 12, (Ancient York
Masons, under the Patronage of His Royal
Highness Prince Edward) held in the City of
Montreal, in the Province of Lower Canada.*

*On the Motion of Brother Radford, seconded
by Brother Sullivan,*

*Resolved unanimously, that the Thanks of this
Lodge, be Presented to the Reverend Brother
Tunstall, for the excellent Sermon he Preached on
Saint John's day last, before Lodges No. 4, 8,
and 12, at the request of St. Paul's and Union
Lodges. And request a copy of the said Sermon,
in order to its being Printed for the Edification of
the Brethren in general.*

*Brother Martin, and Brother Radford, to con-
duct the Business.*

Extract from the Minutes,

GWYN RADFORD, Sec'ry.

Of Saint Paul's Lodge, No. 12.

February 13th, 1798.

S E R M O N.

GENESIS, 13 chap. 18 ver.

And Abram said unto Lot, let there be no strife between me and thee, for we be Brethren.

HOWEVER unequal I may be to the task I have undertaken, in attempting to fulfill the intention of that laudable institution, of which I have the honor of being a member, I cannot but feel a great satisfaction in making a common cause with the rest of my Brethren in the celebration of the present solemnity.

It will not be objected to me that I am treating a subject, known only to the Society to which I belong: The Mystery of our order may in part be known to others; and certainly the effects and advantages of this association are scattered abroad, so as not to have escaped the penetration of a discerning public—It is before you then, before the most impartial and
unprejudiced

unprejudiced reason, that I submit my proofs, if I advance any thing that is contrary to it, or what does not agree with the most invariable rules of our Society.

I must admit at the same time, that in spite of the equity of our principles, so abhorrent to the ideas of Party Spirit, the order of Ancient Masons has found both its Adversaries and competitors:—And perhaps there was never any party in the world that had not its opposers. The truest Religion upon Earth has had more enemies to encounter, than even falsehood and error; and can we suppose that the creed of Mahomet, which pretends neither to inspiration nor infallibility, should have escaped the enterprizes of innovation? Still we see and acknowledge amongst our Brethren of modern denomination many that are highly respectable from Rank and other qualities that distinguish them from the croud; and for whom on account of a similarity in some objects of our institution, we could wish to cherish a more intimate union. But in order that the world at large, (which is too apt to suffer itself to be imposed upon by misrepresentation or by blind prevention, so as not to be able or willing to discern the seeming differences of things) in order, I say, that the world by these means may not form conclusions to the great disparagement of the common Corps of Mason-

ry;

ry; I shall in the first place, lay before you the principles of Masonry as universally acknowledged.

In the second place, I shall give you a short account of the Ancient order of York Masons—and conclude with an exhortation to the Brethren of that order.

If we trace back Man to the first Rudiments of Nature, untutored, unsocial, without the Arts or knowlege of Living, we find him an inhabitant of the woods, and more savage than the beasts of the field left under the guidance of his own malignant passions. We see him without security, without comfort, aiming his fury chiefly against his own species; "The hand of every man is against him," and his against his fellow. By degrees almost imperceptible, he slowly emerges from barbarity, and adopts the plans of order, and improvement. The Divine Rays of knowlege still further illuminate him, and at last he learns the use of the kind interchange of the social Affections, and that universal Love which is to serve as the basis of his happiness. Hence we find him beginning to form the first bands of Society and surveying the works of Nature at large, and after the example of the great Architect of the world, pursuing his plans with Symmetry and Order—Cities rise—Associations form—And the first principles of Masonry expand themselves in the mind of man; prescribing a suitable action with those relations he stands in to his common humanity, his fellow-creatures.

tures, and his Creator. Still the institutions of Masonry, however good and excellent in themselves, were merely human or social. And Human Laws, however they may be calculated to the general good of Society, yet it is Religion alone, that secures the end of it—Hence we find that Masonry derives its chief and best Doctrines from that great store-house of Divine Wisdom, the Old and New Testament.—It is there we find the state of Mankind, whether Civil or Religious, illustrated and enforced by the best precepts. In them we find drawn the Tabernacle of God, and that great Prototype of the Craft, the Temple of Solomon. There we find the Righteous and all Merciful Scheme of Salvation, the Spiritual House of God; of which Christ our Savior, is the chief Corner Stone. And upon this valuable Stone we may securely trust, and build. Here David may find sure footing;—Here Moses may rest his heavy hands till Israel prevail;—Here Jacob may repose safely in his Solitude, and behold the Ladder that reaches to the Gates of Heaven;—Trust but here, and the very Gates of Hell shall lose their prevailing power.—Moreover, the delight of Christ is to be with the Sons of Men, and to grow with them into one frame and constitution—What shall we say then of those Builders who reject this Stone from their Religious Edifice? Hear what the Evangelist says, “Who so falleth on this Stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever

whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."

Let then this Sacred Truth prevail with us, my Brethren, over all Herefy in opinion, till it burn up and consume the precious Superstructure of Wood, Hay, and Stubble, and true Masonry, like oft tried silver appear again in its native purity and candor. In this condition we received it from our Fathers; so sacred a deposit let us religiously keep, and transmit with the same pious care to our Posterity.

Some account of that Ancient Body of Free Masons who have delivered to us these records, may justly merit a place here; which will lead me to the Second Point I proposed to handle—A Brief detail of the past and present state of that Ancient order of York Masons.

England is the Country where our Order has from the beginning appeared with the greatest Eclat.

We read that Prince Edwin first summoned all the Ancient Masons at York, A. D. 926, at which time the laws and regulations were made for the perpetual Harmony of the Brotherhood. The Innocence and Integrity of its first principles have to our days been conspicuous, without having incurred the shadow of suspicion or reproach.

It has admitted amongst its members, the honest men of all Parties—Catholics and Protestants, Presbyterians,

byterians and Episcopalians. Nevertheless, the Order, though it included within its bosom, characters whose views, designs and sentiments were utterly opposite; yet it has maintained its integrity in the midst of times the most troublesome, and the most tumultuous. For these divisions could never ferment in a Society, where party doctrines never became the subjects of dispute. A Society instituted for the purpose of keeping peace amongst the Brethren, could not, and ought not embrace any party. The fierce and angry language of debate were banished the Lodges. It reunited all parties without forming any of its own. Under such wise and wholesome regulations the Society of York Masons preserved inviolate their most Ancient System. Till in the year 1702, the age and infirmities of our celebrated Grand Master Sir C. Wren, brought along with them a gradual inattention to the Lodges, and at length the annual festivals were entirely neglected.

With this illustrious period decayed the pride and glory of Ancient Masonry. Novel forms of Doctrine crept into the institution in lieu of those which were sanctioned by the most venerable Antiquity.—Modern Taste corrupted the genuine pile, by which the necessary attendants of Revolutionary plans were introduced, the composite mass of Modern Phrase, and Modern discipline.

However the Ark has not been lost, though it has

has so long remained in the hands of the stranger.— Though new superstructures have been raised, still the Ancient Foundation has not been shaken. The Ancient Spirit of Masonry has been revived in this our Country, and these our latter days, and now bids fair under the Auspices of our Illustrious Master Builder, His Royal Highness Prince Edward, its most zealous Defender and Protector, to stand the monument of Strength and Beauty to after Ages.

And let me call upon the Brethren whose high privilege it is to enjoy the benefits of Masonry under such a Patron, to preserve and defend it against all its enemies. Let us exhibit the great fundamental of Masonry, as well as of all civil Society, our Love of Order. And above all, let us expose and repel the unfounded and malicious attacks of those from without, who would confound the peaceful innocence of our mysteries with those Clubs and Societies, which in other Countries have been the teeming nurseries of Misrule and Anarchy. Let it be shewn a thing impossible that a Mason can entertain one factious thought, whilst under the happy dependance on English Liberty he enjoys in this country, and would contribute his ALL to the support; (of what even Enemies have proclaimed) the best of Laws, the best Constitution, the best King, and the best Religion in the World.

I must still beg leave to add a few words by way of
exhortation,

exhortation, more particularly addressed to the Brethren on the score of the relation subsisting between them, and the modern Brethren of our Order.

There is but as little probability that Mankind should be uniform in their sentiments, as that they should speak the same language. Far then be it from us, my Brethren, to suffer Envy or Jealousy to swell in our breasts; which possessed the chosen Sons of Jacob; They carried their aversion so far that they could not speak peaceably unto Joseph. Now though in this case they did not contend who should be the greatest, yet it was in effect the same, they could not bear a Superior.

We may see in this instance to what lengths passion and virulence may unhappily drive us, so as to unloose the common ties of Nature, and in its consequences so dreadful as not to spare even a Brother.

Let us not then prejudge our younger Brother lest we be not able to judge at all, and to establish a false opinion of him—But rather let us strive to break down the Partition wall, as St. Paul calls it, which now hangs betwixt us and Him. In a building we know the corner is the point where the sides which stand and look different ways, meet; so the walls of different aspects find there strength and connection.—So let us, following the dictates of our common Principles, adopt the same connecting tie, so that we
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may be drawn, and knit together in the bonds of Peace, and Mutual Love. I shall conclude all with a Collect, wherein the Doctrines and Application are finely drawn together in these few words :

O Almighty God who hast built thy Church upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner Stone, grant us to be joined together in Unity of Spirit, that we may be made an holy temple acceptable unto thee, thro' Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

FINIS.